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Democracy Dies in Darkness

FRIDAY, JUNE 29, 2018 · **$2**

5 killed at Capital Gazette in Annapolis

MATT MCCLAIN/THE WASHINGTON POST

A police officer hugs a woman coming from the direction of the Capital Gazette building in Annapolis on Thursday after a gunman attacked the newspaper's office, killing five and injuring two. Police arrested a suspect in the newsroom, an official said.

GUNMAN'S MOTIVE SAID TO BE GRUDGE

Police name suspect as Jarrod Ramos, 38, of Md.

BY LYNH BUI, OVETTA WIGGINS AND TOM JACKMAN

A man with a vendetta against a newspaper in Annapolis, Md., fired a shotgun through the newsroom's glass doors and at its employees, killing five and injuring two others Thursday afternoon in a targeted shooting, according to police.

The attack appears to be the deadliest involving journalists in the United States in decades.

Local police said the Capital Gazette was targeted, prompting heightened security in newsrooms nationwide.

A bulletin emailed to Maryland law enforcement officials identified the suspect as Jarrod Ramos, 38. Police were searching an apartment in Laurel, Md., late Thursday that is linked to Ramos.

Ramos lost a defamation case against the paper in 2015 over a 2011 column he contended defamed him. The column provided an account of Ramos's guilty plea to criminal harassment of a woman over social media.

Police, who arrived at the scene within a minute of the reported gunfire, apprehended a gunman found hiding under a desk in the newsroom, according to the top official in Anne Arundel County, where the attack occurred.

The suspect was not cooperating with investigators. He carried canisters with smoke grenades that he used in the building,

SHOOTING CONTINUED ON A8

Suspect had 'vendetta'
Jarrod Ramos had sued the paper for defamation and lost. **A8**

'A real craftsman'
Rob Hiaasen, an assistant editor at the Capital Gazette, was killed. **A9**

Newspaper clings to its mission as a polarized nation mines for blame

BY MARC FISHER

The first tweet was urgent and spare: "Active shooter 888 Bestgate please help us," wrote Anthony Messenger, a summer intern at the Capital Gazette, a struggling small-town newspaper in Annapolis.

But within minutes after that 2:43 p.m. tweet Thursday, a devastating shooting in a suburban office building prompted reactions that again demonstrated the country's wrenching divisions.

On Twitter and other social media, shreds of good news — reporters and editors at the Capital pronouncing themselves safe — were quickly overwhelmed by accusations and assumptions, mostly unfounded, about who was responsible and how the shootings fit into the story of a divided and angry nation.

With five of his colleagues dead and two others wounded, Jimmy DeButts, an editor at the Capital, felt compelled to offer a defense of the work his colleagues do. He begged people on Twitter to "stop asking for information/interviews. I'm in no position to speak, just know @capgaznews reporters & editors give all they have every day. There are no 40 hour weeks, no big paydays — just a passion for telling stories from our community."

A shooting at a newspaper, even a local paper that mostly steers clear of national politics, opens a window into the economic dislocation that has altered the way Americans work and how they learn about their communities.

"We keep doing more with less," DeButts tweeted. "We find ways to cover high school sports, breaking news, tax hikes, school budgets & local entertainment . . . We try to expose corruption. We fight to get access to public records . . . The reporters & editors put their all into finding the truth. That is our mission. Will always be."

From inside the Annapolis newsroom, reporter Phil Davis provided an immediate narration of the chaos around him. "Gunman shot through the glass door to the office and opened fire on multiple employees," he tweeted an hour after the attack. "Can't say much more and don't want to declare anyone dead, but

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Abortion foes plan cautious approach

Despite opening on high court, overturning *Roe* is not priority, activists say

BY AMY GARDNER

Leaders of the antiabortion movement said Thursday that they are in no hurry to overturn the landmark *Roe v. Wade* abortion rights decision, saying they plan to stick with their longstanding strategy of pushing for incremental restrictions despite the tantalizing prospect of a more conservative Supreme Court.

Even with Justice Anthony M. Kennedy's announced retirement, these activists said they are not sure the time is ripe for a wholesale reconsideration of the 1973 ruling.

For decades, the movement has followed a methodical strategy of slowly chipping away at abortion rights, one state at a time, with measures that curtail the timing or nature of the procedure but steer clear of outright bans.

That playbook was warranted for two reasons, several of the activists said Thursday: They believed an outright ban would be struck down, and they weren't sure

ABORTION CONTINUED ON A7

'Which side are you on?'
Liberals, GOP pressure centrist Democrats over court pick. **A6**

Roberts gets powerful new role on court: Swing vote

BY ROBERT BARNES

With the retirement of Justice Anthony M. Kennedy and the likelihood that President Trump will choose a more conservative replacement, Chief Justice John G. Roberts Jr. is poised to play a pivotal role on the court he has headed for 13 years.

Roberts has been content to play the long game, moving the court to the right in incremental steps. But now, with more conservative colleagues on one side and liberals on the other, Roberts will have the ability to supply the deciding fifth vote and dictate the terms of the deal.

"With four presumably reliable conservative votes, he'll be in a unique position to decide where, how far, and how fast, the court goes," said Gregory G. Garre, who was a solicitor general under President George W. Bush.

"This will put the chief in more of a swing justice role, and make him one of the most powerful chief justices in recent history."

Roberts has joked in the past that it is a historical accident that the chief justice gets only one vote,

COURT CONTINUED ON A6

Trucker shortage poses economic threat

As desperate companies hike wages, costs are being passed on to consumers

BY HEATHER LONG

LAKE MILTON, OHIO — Bob Blocksom, an 87-year-old former insurance salesman, needs a job. He hasn't saved enough money for his retirement. And trucking companies, desperate for workers, are willing to give him one.

Age didn't matter, they said. If Blocksom could get his "CDL" — commercial driver's license — they would hire him for a $50,000 job. One even offered to pay his tuition for driver training school, but there was a catch: Blocksom had to commit to driving an 18-wheel truck all over the United States for a year.

So far, that has been too big of an ask for Blocksom, who doesn't want to spend long stretches of time away from his wife of 60 years. "The more I think about it, it would be tough to be on the road Monday through Friday," he said.

As the nation faces a historically low level of unemployment, trucking companies are doing

DUSTIN FRANZ FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

Rick Halt, an instructor at TDDS Technical Institute in Lake Milton, Ohio, teaches students in a truck-driving program June 12.

what economists have said firms need to do to attract and retain workers: They're hiking pay significantly, offering bonuses and even recruiting people they previously wouldn't have considered.

But it's not working. The industry reports a growing labor shortage — 63,000 open positions this year, a number expected to more than double in coming years — that could have

TRUCKERS CONTINUED ON A20

Brexit's 'Bad Boys' built ties with Russia, Trump

Mueller scrutinizes how Britons got cozy with diplomat, campaign team

BY MANUEL ROIG-FRANZIA, ROSALIND S. HELDERMAN, WILLIAM BOOTH AND TOM HAMBURGER

BRISTOL, ENGLAND — On Aug. 19, 2016, Arron Banks, a wealthy British businessman, sat down at the palatial residence of the Russian ambassador to London for a lunch of wild halibut and *Belevskaya pastila* apple sweets accompanied by Russian white wine.

Banks had just scored a huge win. From relative obscurity, he had become the largest political donor in British history by pouring millions into Brexit, the campaign to disentangle the United Kingdom from the European Union that had earned a jaw-dropping victory at the polls two months earlier.

Now he had something else that bolstered his standing as he sat down with his new Russian friend, Ambassador Alexander Yakovenko: his team's deepening ties to Donald Trump's insurgent presidential bid in the United States. A major Brexit supporter, Stephen K. Bannon, had just been installed as chief executive of Trump's campaign. And Banks and his fellow Brexiteers had been invited to attend a fundraiser with Trump in Mississippi.

Less than a week after the meeting with the Russian envoy, Banks and firebrand Brexit politician Nigel Farage — by then a cult hero among some anti-establishment Trump supporters — were huddling privately with the Republican nominee in Jackson, Miss., where Farage wowed a foot-stomping crowd at a Trump rally.

Banks's journey from a lavish meal with a Russian diplomat in

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YURI GRIPAS/REUTERS

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China sanctions sought A U.S. ambassador is pressing the Trump administration to punish Beijing for its crackdown on faith groups. **A13**

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The Senate passed a sweeping farm bill, setting up a bitter fight with the House over food stamps and farm subsidies. A9
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Amazon.com announced moves that could disrupt two industries — delivery services and pharmacy. A15

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